ITMC Meeting Handouts

- **December 28, 2000 –**
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The Network Administrators Group (NAG) discussed the new Electronic Mail Address Naming Convention (Standard S-TA-006-002) at their last meeting on December 7, 2000. It was the consensus of the group that this new standard may cause more problems than it solves. Past comments to the draft standard and possible alternatives were discussed. This document outlines those concerns and suggested alternatives.

There were three main areas of concern with the new standard as follows:

1   Creation of a single point of failure for email

2   Does not facilitate routing to correct person or process

3   Duplicate addresses need resolved

A "flattened" enterprise e-mail address would change the format from:
First.Last@agcy.state.ia.us (agcy = Agency acronym)

To
First.Last@state.ia.us

It shortens what's on the right side of the 'at' sign by 5 characters at the most while still using the "First.Last" convention on the left. Agencies can keep their existing addresses (eg First.Last@agcy.state.ia.us), however, the proposed new address would be mandatory for everyone, and the state's search engine would only provide this address.

Since removing the agency acronym also removes address uniqueness, the standard proposes duplicate names be resolved by adding a numeric to the last name. For example, a second John Smith would be John.Smith2@state.ia.us. Implementing this standard results in all e-mail addressed to <anything>@state.ia.us to be routed through one location for address translation before going to the destination post office.

Although a shortened address initially sounds appealing, below are some concerns if this standard is implemented:

- Increased costs to alleviate congestion and single point of failure for address translation and routing
- Loss of control for state agencies; extra hop for messages
- More than one E-mail address for everyone, increased confusion
- Reply address may be different than address sent to
- No easy way to identify where a person works
- Uniqueness process undesirable

Currently, many state agencies have one e-mail address, and their mail routes directly to them. Advantages of this include:

- Distributed routing; mail goes directly to the intended post office
- Network Administrators have more control of e-mail
- Outages affect only that Agency
- Single E-mail address; less confusion
- Uniqueness is resolved at the agency level
- In compliance with published RFC's

A standard for email naming makes sense and should serve a purpose. The standard when implemented should be able to facilitate the public's ability to send email to the correct person or process to accomplish their task. The new standard simply shortens the domain portion of the email by at most 5 characters. It doesn't matter how long or short the email name is if the public cannot find the right person to contact for the task to be completed.

A couple alternatives include:

- o *Change the standard to adopt the [First.Last@agcy.state.ia.us].* A few agencies still use an eight-character id similar to a log on id for their email address, as in jsmith@xyz.state.ia.us This would help routing to the correct agency without additional hardware/software.
- o *Post e-mail addresses on the web for both internal (state government) and external (public) use & include process information.*

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STATE OF IOWA   IT ENTERPRISE STANDARDS & POLICIES PROGRAM

Published by: Information Technology Department, Policy & Planning Division

Technology: Electronic Mail

Category: Electronic Mail Address Naming Convention

Purpose: To create a standard for State of Iowa enterprise E-Mail
                         addresses.

Effective Date: July 7, 2000

Current Profile:

Electronic mail (E-Mail) has become a common form of communication in support of the state's business operations.   Not only do those within state government rely on E-Mail as a means to communicate and collaborate internally, but citizens, clients, partners, and business associates strategically utilize this technology to communicate with state government as well.

With such extensive and universal reliance on E-Mail technology, it has become important to incorporate a universal E-Mail naming convention to enable and provide a common, uniform association for all E-Mail boxes and departmental entities within the State enterprise.   While state agencies provide departmental E-Mail services, a single, enterprise-wide E-Mail naming convention does not, prior to this standard, exist.

A consistent, predictable enterprise E-Mail addressing scheme is recommended and is addressed by this standard.

Statement of Direction:

With increasing Electronic Mail usage, it has become apparent that the state enterprise would benefit from an E-Mail address naming convention that would be common across the various state agencies, predictable in its deployment, convenient and user-friendly to its users and stakeholders, and consistent within the context of an enterprise E-Mail directory.

The intent of this published standard is to implement an E-Mail naming convention across the state enterprise that promotes compatibility of mail addresses and names, common and convenient naming structures, and a unified E-Mail service directory that is effective for all users of the system.

This standard will apply to the top-level, enterprise E-Mail addressing and naming schemes. It is not intended to preclude the use of E-Mail naming conventions deployed within individual departmental systems.

Implementation:

An implementation and service delivery plan to support this standard will be developed by the Information Technology Department in conjunction with the Iowa Communications Network. An implementation completion date is targeted for July 1, 2001. This standard is subject to further review during the course of planning for this implementation.

Standard:

This standard addresses the following enterprise E-Mail naming convention issues:

1.   Domain Name
2.   User Name (Personal Naming)
3.   User Name - Resolution of Duplicates

While this standard applies to enterprise naming conventions, it does not preclude the use of departmental-specific naming conventions applied to departmental E-Mail systems.

1.   Domain Name.

The enterprise E-Mail domain name is:
@state.ia.us

Each enterprise E-Mail address will utilize this enterprise domain name.

2.   User Name (Personal Naming Convention).

The user name is mapped to the end-user's mailbox.

The Personal Naming Convention provides for the user name to be on the left side of the '@', and is defined by a combination of first and last name separated by a period. For example:
joe.doe@state.ia.us.

3.   User Name – Resolution of Duplicates.

A major objective is to maintain naming uniqueness across the organization. Therefore, resolving duplicate user names will require a consistent and common methodology. The defined practice for resolution of duplicate names utilizes a numbering approach where a unique number is appended to the user last name to attain desired differentiation. The assignment of this unique number begins with the number "2" and is enumerated by an increased value of "1" for subsequent instances of duplication.

To illustrate:
joe.doe@state.ia.us   Joe Doe – occurrence #1
joe.doe2@state.ia.us   Joe Doe – occurrence #2
joe.doe3@state.ia.us   Joe Doe – occurrence #3

Excerps from Internet RFC 1480

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Another suggestion was that private schools be registered directly
    under K12, while public schools must be under a district under K12.
    This would require the operator of the K12 branch to register all
    districts and private schools himself (checking for name uniqueness),
    he couldn't easily delegate the registration of the private schools
    to anyone else.

    Community Colleges and Technical Schools

    To distinguish Community Colleges and Technical/Vocational schools,
    the keywords "CC" and "TEC" have been created.

    Some School Examples

    Hamilton.High.LA-Unified.K12.CA.US   <== a public school
    Sherman-Oaks.Elem.LA-Unified.K12.CA.US   <== a public school
    John-Muir.Middle.Santa-Monica.K12.CA.US   <== a public school
    Crossroads-School.Santa-Monica.CA.US   <== a private school
    SMCC.CC.CA.US   <== a community college
    TECMCC.CC.CA.US   <== a community college
    Brick-and-Basket-Institute.TEC.CA.US   <== a technical college
    Northridge.CSU.STATE.CA.US   <== a state university

    2.4 State Agencies

    Several states are setting up networks to interconnect the offices of
    state government agencies. The hosts in such networks should be
    registered under the STATE.<state-code>.US branch.

    A US Domain name space has been established for the state government
    agencies. For example, in the State of Minnesota, the subdomain is
    STATE.MN.US.

        State Agencies:

        Senate.STATE.MN.US   <== State Senate
        MDH.STATE.MN.US   <== Dept. of Health
        CALTRANS.STATE.CA.US   <== Dept. of Transportation
        DMV.STATE.CA.US   <== Dept. of Motor Vehicles

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Name Space Within States:

"locality" - cities, counties, parishes, and townships. Subdomains
under the "locality" would be like CI.<city>.<state>.US,
CO.<county>.<state>.US, or businesses. For example:
Petville.Marvista.CA.US.

"CI" - This branch is used for city government agencies and is a
subdomain under the "locality" name (like Los Angeles). For example:
Fire-Dept.CI.Los-Angeles.CA.US.

"CO" - This branch is used for county government agencies and is a
subdomain under the "locality" name (like Los Angeles). For example:
Fire-Dept.CO.San-Diego.CA.US.

"K12" - This branch may be used for public school districts. A
special name "PVT" can be used in the place of a school district name
for private schools. For example: <school-name>.K12.<state>.US and
<school-name>.PVT.K12.<state>.US.

"CC" - COMMUNITY COLLEGES - This branch was established for all state
wide community colleges. For example: <school-name>.CC.<state>.US.

"TEC" - TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS - The branch "TEC" was
established for technical and vocational schools and colleges. For
example: <school-name>.TEC.<state>.US.

"LIB" - LIBRARIES (STATE, REGIONAL, CITY, COUNTY) - This branch may
be used for libraries only. For example: <lib-name>.LIB.<state>.US.

"STATE" - This branch may be used for state government agencies. For
example: <org-name>.STATE.<state>.US.

"GEN" - GENERAL INDEPENDENT ENTITY - This branch is for the things
that don't fit easily into any other structure listed -- things that
might fit in to something like ORG at the top-level. It is best not
to use the same keywords (ORG, EDU, COM, etc.) that are used at the
top-level to avoid confusion. GEN would be used for such things as,
state-wide organizations, clubs, or domain parks. For example:
<org-name>.GEN.<state-code>.US.

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